

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Summer Time

Wild Animal Awareness

Bats • Beavers • Foxes • Mosquitoes • Raccoons • Skunks • Squirrels • Ticks

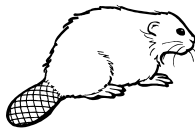
Amherst is a beautiful place to live! Many of us especially enjoy the summer months when the land is green and the parking spaces are plentiful. We have chosen to live in a place close to nature and animals are a part of that wonder. You may be noticing more wild animals in our community as the weather becomes warmer. Some of these animals are fun to spot; some seem cute enough to be pets, and others we would rather avoid completely. Regardless of their looks, it is important to remember that wild animals can carry diseases and should be left alone. Here is what **you need to know** about some of our local wild animals so you can be safe and avoid getting sick.

Bats, Raccoons, Skunks, Squirrels, Woodchucks, and Foxes



All of these animals can carry rabies. **Rabies is a virus and can cause serious illness.** Rabies is spread through the saliva of a rabid animal, usually through a bite or scratch, either to a human or domesticated pet. The virus can also get into the body through open wounds, or through eyes, ears, or mouth. Bats can be especially dangerous because their bites and/or scratches are often so small that they can go unnoticed. It is necessary to test these animals to determine whether they have Rabies and the vaccine will be necessary. A rabid animal may act strangely, either aggressive or overly friendly, or it may show no signs of being ill. A general rule to follow is **to leave them alone. Do not touch or pick up dead animals and do not let your pets play with wild animals as they too could become infected.**

Beavers



Beavers abound in our area. They live around our naturally occurring bodies of water. Beavers can carry a **parasite called GIARDIA**, which is a germ that can affect your stomach and bowels. The most common symptom is a foul-smelling, watery diarrhea, but other abdominal problems, such as cramping, bloating, and gas are symptoms of the disease. Beavers and other rodent carriers can contaminate swimming areas and water supplies with their stools. Always wash your hands well when around untreated water and avoid drinking or swallowing water from these sources because they can make you sick. Left untreated, symptoms can come and go for weeks. Teach your children not to swallow water when they swim in ponds, lakes, or rivers. See your medical provider if you think you or a family member may have giardia.

Ticks



Ticks in general can carry a variety of diseases, Deer Ticks can carry Lyme disease. Deer Ticks are extremely small, which is why it is especially important to take precautions. If you are in an area likely to have ticks (areas that have long, thick grass and/or heavily wooded areas), wear clothes that provide adequate coverage and use repellent that contains Deet. Please be aware that this is not safe to use these products on infants and young children. Make sure that you check yourself, your children and pets carefully. Look between the toes, the back of the knees, the groin, the armpits, the back of the neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears. If a tick is found remove it with fine point tweezers, grasping as close to the skin as possible and pulling straight out with steady pressure. Lyme disease is treatable. Sometimes, shortly after the tick bite a "bull's eye" rash around the bite location will appear. If you have any flu-like symptoms that last for a few days contact your medical provider. These symptoms could include fatigue, chills, fever (100 to 103 degrees), headache, stiff neck, and backache. Less often, widespread muscle and joint aches, nausea, vomiting, and sore throat occur. Glands may be swollen in the area around the tick bite or elsewhere. These symptoms may last from five to 21 days and may also occur without the presence of a rash.

Mosquitoes



Some mosquitoes in Western Massachusetts have been found to be carrying West Nile Virus. The virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes become infected when they bite a bird who carries the virus. **Please call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1-866-627-7968 to report any dead crows or bluejays.** The risk of getting ill from West Nile Virus is low, but there is no vaccine. To lower your risk of being infected, protect yourself from getting bit. This can be done by limiting your activity during dusk and dawn, wearing clothes that provide adequate coverage, and wearing repellent that contains Deet. Please be aware that this is not safe to use these products on infants and young children. One final precaution you can take to avoid growing numbers of mosquitoes is to remove standing water (bird baths, wading pools, old tires, etc.) that can be a breeding site for mosquitoes.

General Tips to Avoiding Problems with Wild Animals:

- Don't approach wild animals and don't pick up dead ones.
- Keep your trash in a container with a lid.
- Seal your house as best you can, especially windows, and access to attics and basements.
- Keep your chimney in good repair.
- **Never feed wild animals.**
- Wear protective clothing and wash your hands.

For more information regarding animal awareness please contact
The Amherst Department of Health 256-4077

AMHERST HEALTH DEPARTMENT

What you need to know about Summer Time Wild Animal Awareness

Bats • Beavers • Foxes • Mosquitoes • Raccoons • Skunks • Squirrels • Ticks

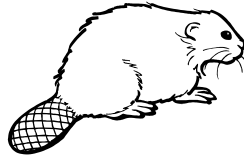
Rabies



Bats, Raccoons, Skunks, Squirrels, Woodchucks, and Foxes can carry Rabies.

- Rabies is a virus and can cause serious illness.
- Rabies is spread through a bite or scratch, either to a human or domesticated animal.
- There is a vaccination available for rabies.
- Don't approach any wild animals and don't let your pets approach wild animals.

Giardia



- Beavers and other rodents that live near waterways can carry Giardia
- Giardia is a parasite.
- Giardia is often spread in contaminated naturally occurring bodies of water.
- Giardia can cause a variety of stomach problems. Diarrhea is the most common symptom.
- Avoid drinking or swallowing water from ponds, lakes, or rivers.
- Teach your children to play and swim in the water without drinking or swallowing.
- See your physician if you or your child become symptomatic.

Lyme Disease



- Ticks are carriers of many diseases.
- Deer ticks carry Lyme Disease.
- There is no vaccine for Lyme Disease.
- In the deep woods or high grass wear clothes that provide adequate coverage.
- For extra protection in wilderness settings, adults should use repellent that contains Deet, but it is not safe to use these products on infants and young children.
- Check yourself carefully after outdoor excursions.
- If a tick is found remove it with fine point tweezers, grasping as close to the skin as possible and pulling straight out with steady pressure.
- Lyme Disease is treatable. If you notice a “bull’s eye” rash or experience flu like symptoms see your medical provider.

West Nile Virus



- Some mosquitoes in Western Massachusetts have been found to carry West Nile Virus.
- Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a bird who is carrying the virus.
- To report dead crows or bluejays call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1-866-627-7968.
- To protect yourself and your family, wear clothes that provide adequate coverage at dawn and dusk.
- For added protection adults should use repellent that contains Deet, but it is not safe to use these products on infants and young children.
- Remove any standing water that can be a potential breeding site for mosquitoes.

**For more information regarding animal awareness please contact
The Amherst Department of Health at 256-4077**